

SECRETARIAT OFFICE MANUAL SERIES

RECORD MANAGEMENT



Edition No.1
2019

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Activities

Record Management covers the activities concerning recording, retention, appraisal, retrieval, and weeding out. Each record creating agency will nominate a Departmental Records Officer (DRO) who is not below the level of a Section Officer for overall Records Management.

1.2 Stage of Recording

- (1) Files should be recorded after action on the issues considered thereon has been completed.
- (2) However, files of a purely ephemeral nature (such as casual leave records or circulars of temporary nature) containing papers of little or routine value may be destroyed after one year without being formally recorded.
- (3) Files may be recorded under any one of the categories A, B or C as given in chapter "categorization of records"

2 CATEGORIZATION OF RECORDS

2.1 Category 'A' - 'keep and microfilm'

This categorization will be adopted for files which qualify for permanent preservation for administrative purposes and which have to be microfilmed because they contain:

- (1) A document so precious that its original must be preserved intact and access to it in the original form must be restricted to the barest minimum; or
- (2) Material likely to be required for frequent reference by different parties.
- (3) Files of historical importance
- (4) The illustrative list of records of value for administrative purposes is given below. Papers of the following categories will normally be among those required to be kept indefinitely for administration's use:
 - Papers containing evidence of rights or obligations of or against the government, e.g., title to property, claims for compensation not subject to a time limit, formal instruments such as awards, schemes, orders, sanctions, etc.
 - Papers relating to major policy decisions, including those relating to the preparation of legislation.
 - Papers regarding constitution, functions and working of important committees, working groups, etc.
 - Papers providing lasting precedents for important procedures, e.g., administrative memoranda, historical reports and summaries, legal opinions on important matters.
 - Papers concerning rules, regulations, departmental guides or instructions of general application.
 - Papers relating to salient features of organisation and staffing of government departments and offices.
 - Papers relating to important litigation or 'causes celebres' in which the administration was involved.
- (5) The illustrative list of records of historical importance is given below. Much of the material likely to be preserved for administrative purposes will be of interest for research purpose as well; but papers of the following categories should be specially considered as of value to historians.
 - Papers relating to the origin of a Department or agency of government; how it was organised; how it functioned; and (if defunct) how and why it was dissolved.

- Data about what the department/agency accomplished. (Samples by way of illustration may be enough; but the need for such samples may be dispensed with where published annual reports are available).
- Papers relating to a change of policy. This is not always easy to recognise, but watch should be kept for (a) summary for a Minister, (b) the appointment of a departmental or inter-departmental committee or working group, and (c) note for the Cabinet or a Cabinet Committee. Generally, there should be a conscious effort to preserve all such papers, including those reflecting conflicting points of view. In the case of inter-departmental committees, however, it is important that a complete set of papers be kept only by the Departments mainly concerned - usually the one providing secretariat.
- Papers relating to the implementation of a change of policy, including a complete set of instructions to executive agencies etc., and relevant forms.
- Papers relating to a well-known public or international event or cause celebre, or to other events which gave rise to interest or controversy on the national plane.
- Papers containing direct reference to trends or developments in political, social, economic or other fields, particularly if they contain unpublished statistical or financial data covering a long period or a wide area.
- Papers cited in or noted as consulted in connection with, official publications.
- Papers relating to the more important aspects of scientific or technical research and development.
- Papers containing matters of local interest of which it is unreasonable to expect that evidence will be available locally, or comprising synopsis of such information covering the whole country or a wide area.
- Papers relating to obsolete activities or investigations, or to abortive scheme in important fields.
- Any other specific category of records which, according to the departmental instructions issued in consultation with the National Archives, have to be treated as genuine source of information on any aspect of history - political, social, economic, etc., or are considered to be of biographical or antiquarian interest.
- Papers related to financial policy etc.
- Plans and reports of Irrigation projects.

2.2 Category 'B' - 'keep but do not microfilm'

This category will cover files required for permanent preservation for administrative purposes, such as those listed in sub-para 2.1(4) above. It will, however, exclude the

nature of material falling under the category described in (1) or (2) of sub-para 2(1) above and therefore need not be microfilmed. If it is historical /research value may be upgraded to category A.

2.3 Category 'C' - 'keep for specified period only'

This category will include files of secondary importance and having reference value for a limited period not exceeding 10 years. In exceptional cases, if the record is required to be retained beyond 10 years it will be upgraded to B category.

3 PROCEDURE FOR RECORDING

3.1 Action for Recording

After action on the issue(s) considered on the file has been completed, the dealing hand/initiating officer, in consultation with his supervisory officer, should close and record the file in the manner prescribed below:

- (1) indicate the appropriate category of record and in the case of category 'C', also specify the retention period and the year of destruction;
- (2) where necessary, revise the title of the file so that it describes adequately the contents at that stage;
- (3) extract from the file, copies of important decisions, documents, etc. as are considered useful for future reference and add them to the stock report;
- (4) complete all references and, in particular, mark previous and later references on the subject;

3.2 Action on Recorded Files

The Record Assistant/Assistant Section Officer will thereafter complete columns 8 and 9 of the file register below. Correct the entries in columns 1,2, 3 and 4 where necessary and generate the register.

File Register of Department:

Section:

PH (1)	SH (2)	TH (3)	Title Proper (4)	Date of:		File No. (7)	Year of:		Remarks (10)
				Opening (5)	Closing (6)		Review (8)	Destruction (9)	

4 RECORD RETENTION SCHEDULE

4.1 Instructions

To ensure that files are neither prematurely deleted/destroyed, nor kept for periods longer than necessary, every Department will:

- (1) in respect of records connected with accounts, observe the instructions contained in Finance code.
- (2) in respect of records, relating to Office Procedure (establishment, personnel, housekeeping matters etc.) common to all Departments, follow the schedule of periods of retention for records common to all Departments' issued by the General Administration Department;
- (3) in respect of records connected with its substantive functions, issue a Departmental retention schedule prescribing the periods for which files dealing with specified subjects should be preserved in consultation with the Departmental Records Officer.
- (4) The schedules should be reviewed at least once in 5 years.

4.2 Records retained in Central Records Branch (CRB)

The following is the retention schedule for 'C' category files in CRB.

Nature of Records	No. of years for which kept including the current year from the close of the year to which the records relate
(1)	(2)
Proceedings of Government in the Printed and Manuscript series	4
(a) Government Order in Routine series, Demi-officials, Endorsements and Memoranda (Final disposals) (b) Office orders Routine (c) Annual Indices of the proceedings of the Commissioner of Survey, Settlements and Land Records	5

(d) Proceedings volumes of the commissioner of Survey, Settlements and Land Records (e) Legislative Bills and their connected papers (f) Tour programmes of Ministers (g) Personal Registers other than those relating to the current and the proceedings two years	
(a) Lodged Papers (b) Call Books, Current Distribution Registers, Circulation Registers (c) Attendance registers, daily abstract books, vacation turn lists and similar registers/lists (d) State Administration Reports and connected papers	3
Budget notes of Finance department	7 (with the concurrence of finance dept.)
(a) Printed communications from the Government of India (b) Board's proceedings spare copies (c) Originals of letters reports and returns which are printed in full in proceedings and the original manuscript of notes, unless the original contains important additions and corrections made in the Secretariat or unless the originals are Letters in foreign languages or translation in English which accompanied such communication. (d) Quarterly indices (e) Printed proceedings of the Commissioner of Survey, Settlements and Land Records (all departments)	1
Proceedings volumes	10

Note: Records which do not come under any of the categories mentioned in this paragraph and which are liable to destruction in the Secretariat department itself and the preservation of which is not authorized or specially directed by a Secretary to Government should not be transferred to the Central Record Branch.

5 WEEDING OUT REVIEW

5.1 Category wise reviews

- (1) A category ‘C’ file will be reviewed on the expiry of the specified retention period and weeded out unless there are sufficient grounds warranting its further retention. Justification for retaining a file after review will be recorded with the approval of Assistant Secretary. Retention after a review will be for a period not exceeding ten years, including the period already retained. If a file was originally retained for a period of 10 years, any further retention will require up-gradation of the category.
- (2) Category ‘A’ and category ‘B’ files will be reviewed on attaining the 25th year of their life in consultation with the Departmental Records Officer. In these reviews, the need for revising the original categorization of category ‘B’ files may also be considered.
- (3) After review the Record Assistant/Section Assistant will make entries of revised categorization/retention period in the file registers.
- (4) The Central Record Branch, under the supervision of Departmental Record Officer (DRO), will:
 - (i) transfer category ‘A’ and category ‘B’ files surviving the review undertaken at the 25th year of their Archives; Interim repository to the archives department at secretariat premises may be used for preservation of permanent records and easy access to the records.
 - (ii) in the case of other files:
 - (a) Destroy/delete from servers those marked for destruction;
 - (b) continue those marked for further retention after making the required entries in the record review register in the case of category ‘C’ files.
- (5) Inspecting officers should pay special attention to the stage of Records Management in the sections as well as the Departmental Record Rooms during their inspections.

5.2 Timing

- (1) The year of review of category ‘C’ files be reckoned with reference to the year of their closing and that for category ‘A’ and category ‘B’ files with reference to the year of their opening.
- (2) Beginning in January each year, the Central Record Branch will send to the Departmental Records Officer concerned files due for review in that year, together with a list

of files in the form below, in four lots-in January, April, July and September. The Departmental Records Officer in consultation with the section concerned will finalise the review.

List of files due for review:

Sl. No.	File No.	Instruction of reviewing authority (K- Keep indefinitely/ W-Weed out/ R-Retain)	In case of R, the year of weeding out
(1)	(2)	(3)	
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Note: Write the precise year of weeding in the case of class ‘C’ files proposed to be retained for a further period not exceeding 10 years from the date of their closing.

- (3) Records not falling within the definition of file, e.g., publications, spare copies of circulars, orders, etc., will also be subjected to periodic reviews at suitable intervals and those no longer needed should be weeded out. To facilitate such reviews each section will maintain a register in the form below. Register of spare copies of publications, circulars, orders etc.:

S.No.	Document particulars	Spare copies available	Remarks

- (4) Launch a special drive every 6 months to record/review all old files and to weed out those no longer needed.
- (5) Each MLO may review every quarter the state of indexing/recording/review/weeding out of files in his division and allot time bound tasks towards this and to the members of the staff.

5.3 Litigation

- (1) It may be ensured that in case an inquiry has been initiated departmentally or by a Commission of Inquiry or as a result of Court proceedings having a bearing on the subject matter contained in the files/documents concerned or the files/documents which are required in connection with the implementation of order/judgment of any court of law, such files/documents will not be destroyed, even if, such files/documents have completed their prescribed life as per the Record Retention Schedule.
- (2) Files/documents referred to above may be weeded out only after submission of the Report by the Commission or completion of inquiry or implementation of the judgment/order of the Court(s), with the approval of the concerned Secretary/Head of the Department concerned. In case the implementation of the court order has been challenged/appealed against either by the Government or by the applicant in a higher court, the concerned files/documents will not be weeded until such time the appeal/challenge is considered and finally decided. In such cases the limitation period prescribed for appeals should also be kept in mind.

6 DESTRUCTION

6.1 Categorisation

- (1) First Category: To be destroyed straightaway after a particular period to be specified at the initial stage of sending the disposals to the Central Record Branch. Each such disposal should carry on its docket sheet the words “Destroy after year / years”.
- (2) Second Category: To be sent by the Central Record Branch to the department concerned for scrutiny and certification either as fit to be retained for a further period of time or for destruction. Each disposal falling under this category should carry on its docket sheet the word “To be scrutinized again after year / years”. When new disposals are received in the CRB they will be sorted.

6.2 Manner of handling

Bulky records	If the records are too bulky to be conveniently stitched, the departments concerned should arrange them properly and get them bound in the Government press, after removing papers of ephemeral nature.
Government Orders	Government Orders, whether printed or not, which are communicated by one department of the Secretariat to another and are lodged in the latter will not be docketed and stitched. Such lodged disposals will be destroyed at the end of the usual period.
Loose papers	No loose papers of any kind or books or pamphlets etc., without the appropriate departmental disposal numbers should be sent to the Central Record Branch.
Special Records or registers	If there are any special records or Registers (other than those listed in this Manual), which are created in departments of Secretariat, the concerned departments may list them out and prescribe suitable period for their retention, in consultation with General Administration Department.

6.3 Manner of destruction

- (1) Routine files/records will be manually torn into small pieces and disposed.
- (2) Classified files/records will be destroyed by use of shredder.
- (3) Secret files/records will also be incinerated after being shredded as per provision under ‘Departmental Security Instructions’ issued by the General Administration Department.
- (4) Born digital files will be deleted from the servers.



- Introductory
- Inward
- Outward
- Decision Making
- Office procedure

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

